

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When is the deadline for applying for registration as a PSC in Alabama?

A fully executed application, transcripts, reference letters, examples of mapping and/or other works of soil classification, and a non-refundable application fee of \$100 must be received no later than May 1st to be considered for the current year examination.

2. I have a BS degree in Agronomy (Soils) or in Agronomy (Crops, w/15 semester hours of soils). What additional requirements are needed to qualify for examination as a professional soil classifier?

- (a) A minimum of 1 year experience in soil classification of a grade and character indicating competence to practice as a soil classifier and be otherwise qualified. Examples of experience which fulfill the minimum requirements include:
- (1) Full-time employment as a Soil Scientist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service or a State agency engaged in the National Cooperative Soil Survey for one year; or
 - (2) Mapping a minimum of 5,000 acres at the Order 2 level of the National Cooperative Soil Survey. Mapping will be accomplished under the guidance and supervision of an NRCS soil survey Project Leader or a Professional Soil Classifier and meet or exceed the standards of the National Cooperative Soil Survey; or
 - (3) Describing, classifying (using Soil Taxonomy), and interpreting a minimum of 500 soil pedons in support of evaluations for on-site disposal of waste water or other land use. All work must have been completed under the supervision and guidance of a Professional Soil Classifier.

3. I have a degree or degrees in Geology, Civil Engineering, Biology, Environmental Science, etc... What additional requirements are needed to qualify for examination as a professional soil classifier?

- (a) A minimum of 15 semester hours of college-level course-work in soil related topics, such as Soil Genesis, Classification, and Morphology, General or Introductory Soils, Soil Fertility, Soil Physics, Soil Judging, Soils & Environmental Quality, Soils Engineering, Soil Resources & Conservation, Soil Microbiology, Clay Mineralogy, Soils & Hydrology, Pedology, Soil Chemistry, Soils & Land Use, Soils Seminar, Soils Special Studies, etcí
- (b) A minimum of 2 years experience in soil classification of a grade and character indicating competence to practice as a soil classifier and be otherwise qualified. Examples of experience which fulfill the minimum requirements include:
- (1) Full-time employment as a Soil Scientist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service or a State agency engaged in the National Cooperative Soil Survey for two years; or

- (2) Mapping a minimum of 10,000 acres at the Order 2 level of the National Cooperative Soil Survey. Mapping will be accomplished under the guidance and supervision of an NRCS soil survey Project Leader or a Professional Soil Classifier and meet or exceed the standards of the National Cooperative Soil Survey; or
- (3) Describing, classifying (using Soil Taxonomy), and interpreting a minimum of 1,000 soil pedons in support of evaluations for on-site disposal of waste water or other land use. All work must have been completed under the supervision and guidance of a Professional Soil Classifier.

4. How are distance education (DE) courses treated with regard to academic requirements?

Distance education (DE) soil science courses from accredited institutions are acceptable for academic requirements in pursuance of Soil Classifier Licensing. DE courses are considered the same as traditional soil science courses, thus, if an applicant has a question as to whether a particular course is considered a soil science course, the applicant can submit to the Advisory Council the following for review and opinion: 1) institution, 2) course name and number, and 3) syllabus. Information on traditional courses in soil science curricula can be obtained at Land-Grant Institutions which contain soil science programs.

5. I qualified for and took the examination in June 2006, but did not make the minimum score. What are the requirements for re-examination?

Applicants who desire to re-take the examination within two years of their original application date can do so without submitting a new application package. All that is required is a written request for re-examination along with a check covering the re-examination fee (\$10). The request should be received in the Board office no later than May 1st prior to the examination date.

Applicants who do not request re-examination within two years of their original application date are required to submit a revised, up-to-date application packet which includes reference letters and a \$100 application fee.

6. When is the examination?

The examination is administered once per year, on the 3rd Tuesday of June. The examination is generally held in Funchess Hall, Auburn University. Qualified applicants are notified of the specific date, time, and place of examination at least twenty days prior to the examination. Specific questions on the exam can be e-mailed to: shawjo1@auburn.edu.

7. **I am a registered PSC in Mississippi and Georgia and also hold a certification as a CPSC through ARCPACS. Do I qualify to apply for registration in Alabama through reciprocity without examination?**

The Board may grant registration to an otherwise qualified applicant without examination if he or she holds a certificate of registration in the practice of soil classifying on the basis of comparable qualifications issued by a proper authority of another state. It is incumbent on the applicant to supply to the Board documentation that the qualifications for registration he/she holds from another state are comparable to that of Alabama. Additionally, the Board will only consider registration through reciprocity to registrants of other States if that state has a reciprocity clause in their Registration Law or Act that is similar to the clause in the Alabama Registration Act.

In answer to the specific question ó Yes, holding a current certificate of registration as a PSC issued by the state of Mississippi qualifies you to apply for registration in Alabama through reciprocity without examination. The Board has determined that the Registration Act in Mississippi is comparable to that of Alabama. The Board has also determined that certificates of registration issued through ARCPACS or the Georgia Dept. of Public Health are not comparable to the Alabama Registration Act and thus do not qualify an applicant for reciprocity without examination.

8. **Any further questions can be e-mailed to the Professional Soil Classifier Advisory Council:** James.Mason@al.usda.gov, shawjo1@auburn.edu, martin19475@bellsouth.net, Sanderson.Page@al.usda.gov